



Preferred Worker Benefit Frequently Asked Questions

1. How does Preferred Worker (PW) status help me?

It can help you in your job search. A new employer who offers you work within your medical restrictions receives financial benefits:

- If you were to have a new injury during your PW eligibility period, L&I will pay the costs of the new claim with no direct cost or penalty to your new employer.
- The employer does not pay accident fund or medical aid premiums.

You will not have to pay the employee's Medical Aid Fund premium during your PW eligibility period.

2. How long does this benefit last? Can it be extended?

You have PW eligibility for a maximum of 36 months. Your certification letter lists your start date and expiration date. Any time during that period that you are working in an approved PW job, the PW benefits cover you and your employer. Once the expiration date is reached, the PW benefits end. There are no extensions beyond the maximum 36 months. However, if you are medically unable to work due to your industrial injury during part of your PW eligibility period and your claim is still open, your certification period may be adjusted (decertified) for the period you were unable to look for work.

Note: If in the future your condition improves to the point your doctor releases you to return to work with no restrictions, you will no longer meet the eligibility for PW benefits.

3. Am I limited to just certain types of jobs? Can I use PW out of state?

You may look for any type of job as long as it is within your medical restrictions. You are NOT limited to the job titles you were found employable in or the job you trained for. The job can be part time or full time. You can apply the PW benefit to 2 employers at the same time. Employers in other states that are not governed by the workers compensation laws of Washington would not benefit from this program.

4. Can I change employers?

Yes, you can change employers as many times as you want within the 36 month eligibility period. Whatever time remains in your PW eligibility period can be applied to a new employer.

5. Am I required to tell an employer I am a Preferred Worker?

You are not required to; it's your choice. Decide if you want to use the PW benefit in your job search.

- Some workers prefer not to reveal that they had a work injury for fear that information would discourage a particular employer from hiring them.
- However, there are employers who welcome Preferred Workers—as long as the job is within the worker's medical restrictions—because of the financial incentives it offers employers.

6. Why do I need to know my work restrictions?

You need to know your medical restrictions so that you are applying for jobs that can be approved for PW benefits. When your new employer requests to use the PW benefits, they submit a job description for the new job. If it exceeds the restrictions we have on file, we cannot approve the job.

Know your medical work restrictions. Do you have a copy of your most recent Activity Prescription Form (APF) or Physical Capacity Evaluation (PCE)? You can find these records on the Claim & Account Center.

Note: The employer can still hire you if they want, but the risk of future injury would be on their workers' comp record, they would not be covered by the PW program.

7. Is there a list of employers interested in hiring a Preferred Worker?

There is no list of employers. It's up to you to mention your PW status. Many employers are familiar with the Preferred Worker benefits. For those who are not, the PW brochure is a good introduction.

8. What can I do if the employer has questions about the PW program?

- Make sure to show them the PW brochure you received with your PW certification letter.
- Encourage them to go to the website **www.PreferredWorker.Lni.wa.gov** for more information, including a calculator that lets them estimate potential savings from the PW program.
- Tell them they can call the PW desk at L&I (1-800-845-2634).
- You can call the PW desk yourself if you have questions.

Other formats for persons with disabilities are available on request. Call 1-800-547-8367. TDD users, call 360-902-5797. L&I is an equal opportunity employer.